



News Release

San Antonio District Office

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Public Forum Set for Small Business Owners to Comment on Federal Regulatory Enforcement

AUSTIN, TX - Small business owners, community leaders and representatives of trade associations in Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana who are concerned about excessive enforcement of federal rules can voice their complaints at a **U.S. Small Business Administration Regulatory Fairness Hearing in Austin, Texas on Tuesday, January 22, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to Noon.**

The hearing will be held at Austin City Hall, City Hall Chamber – Room 1001, 301 W. 2nd St., Austin, TX 78701.

SBA National Ombudsman Nicholas Owens, members of the SBA's Region VI Regulatory Fairness Board (which serves the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana), and representatives of federal regulatory agencies will hear comments and complaints about regulatory enforcement and compliance and will discuss the impact of federal regulations on small business.

"One of the leading concerns small business owners face is unfair enforcement of federal regulations. They also worry about telling their stories because they fear retaliation by federal agencies," Owens said. "Small business owners want to play by the rules and comply with federal regulations. We want to encourage Federal regulators to provide effective compliance assistance, rather than go straight to the penalty stage. Regulatory enforcement should be effective, not excessive."

This forum offers small business owners a chance to express their concerns about federal compliance practices and to learn how to more effectively deal with federal regulatory requirements.

Comments and complaints presented during this forum will be directed to the appropriate federal regulatory agency. This information will also be shared with federal officials in the National

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Ombudsman's Annual Report to Congress and with leadership of federal regulatory agencies to assist them with their enforcement actions.

The National Ombudsman's authority to respond to comments on compliance issues is limited to federal regulatory enforcement matters and does not include concerns about obtaining federal contracts, regulations in general, or securing guaranteed loans.

The Austin, TX forum is open to the public. Those wishing to testify should contact Lucille Salinas of the SBA's San Antonio District Office at (210) 403-5921 or by email at Lucille.salinas@sba.gov before the forum. Should small business owners or representatives be unable to attend, written testimony may be sent in advance of the forum to be included in the public record. A toll free telephone number will also be provided for those individuals who would like to testify but are unable to travel to Austin, TX.

Comments and concerns about federal enforcement actions can be addressed directly to SBA's Office of the National Ombudsman at 1-888-734-3247 (REGFAIR). For more information about the National Ombudsman and the Austin, TX, please visit the web site www.sba.gov/ombudsman.

Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance by contacting Disabled Employment Program Manager Lucille Salinas at (210) 403-5921.

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The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was created by Congress in 1953 to support and encourage the creation and success of the small businesses. SBA offers a wide range of financial and business assistance and disaster relief services.

For more information on SBA programs and service visit the SBA's extensive website at www.sba.gov.

All of SBA's programs and services are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis.